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KNOTTING MATTERS

The Magazine of the International Guild of Knot Tyers

INTERNATIONAL GUILD OF KNOT TYERS

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KNOTTING MATTERS

THE MAGAZINE OF THE INTERNATIONAL GUILD OF KNOT TYERS

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The editors welcome the submission of letters, articles, photographs and sketches for publication. Correspondence with the editor may be by e-mail, but more extensive items, such as articles for publication, as well as any pictures, need to be sent as attachments. Pictures should be of good quality. All submissions must include their author's name and e-mail or postal address.

If there are meetings or other events to be publicised in Knotting Matters, please bear in mind the months of publication - March, June, September and December.

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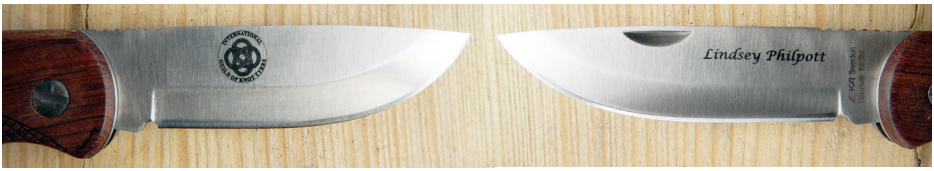
FRONT COVER: A circular mat by Colin Byfleet - see his article on page 36

EDITORIAL

A big ‘thank you’ to Lindsey Philpott who edited this magazine for more than seven years, and introduced some innovative features. It is, perhaps, a measure of his achievement that his successor is not a lonely editor, but a three-person editorial board.

To recognize the work he has done, the Trustees presented Lyndsey with a handsome knife personalized with his name and that of the organisation he has served so well (see below).



Now a plea to all our members from the new editorial team.

Don’t assume that all the knotting things you get up to somehow magically become known to everyone else. Please drop a few lines to the magazine, and include a picture if you can: things you’ve made, things you’ve seen, things you’ve found, something you feel rather proud to have mastered at last, however simple.

Sometimes, seeing the most beautiful coverings, bell ropes, beckets and the like can be intimidating, and it is easy to think that nobody could be interested in ‘my first’ bell rope, or monkey’s paw, long splice or whatever. But tell us about it, show us: it will encourage the others, because, believe it or not, not everyone is a highly skilled, gifted knot tyer.

And if you have a knotty problem, write and tell us - there are plenty of members reading this who will be pleased to help. Most people have a phone camera these days, so see it, snap it, send it.

By the way, the next time you come across a wire stay on a power pole with a bottle screw and two thimbles, take a close look, there’s more to it than you might think! (Article to follow in due course)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

PLEASE NOTE: THE DEADLINE FOR LETTERS AND ARTICLES FOR THE SEPTEMBER ISSUE OF KNOTTING MATTERS IS 26th AUGUST 2016

Dear Lindsey,
Sorry you have to leave your post as Editor of KM. I appreciate all the work you have done, including bringing in colour and also all your remarks. Best wishes on your retirement from this post.
Owen K Nuttall

oOo

Dear Maurice,
Could we have names and faces?
The Guild is run by an Executive Committee under the watchful eye of the Trustees. But even I, who has been in the IGKT from the very beginning, am not absolutely certain what everyone looks like, although I am sure I have met most, if not all, of them.
It struck me that members who are unfortunately unable to attend any of the various meetings would benefit by at least knowing what the various people who are involved with the running of the Guild look like. Indeed I notice that Knotting Matters does not actually list everyone, only the principal officers. May I suggest that, in Knotting Matters, there is a list and contact details of all those who help run the Guild in one way or another and that there should be a photo and perhaps even a short pen portrait.

Des Pawson MBE Co-founder and now Trustee of the IGKT

Des Pawson MBE
69 years old, professional ropeworker, now semi-retired, interested in sailors' ropework, the tools of the rope and canvas working trades and ropemaking.

Dear Maurice,

Whilst in Leeds General Infirmary in March,recovering from an operation, my wife informed David and Sheila Pearson that I would be unable to attend the Yorkshire meeting*. Two days later, I received a Get Well Card from them. Then, after the meeting, I received another card - signed by all the Members who had attended. I would like them all to know this gesture was much appreciated. **AGM 2015 - Ed*

Owen K Nuttall

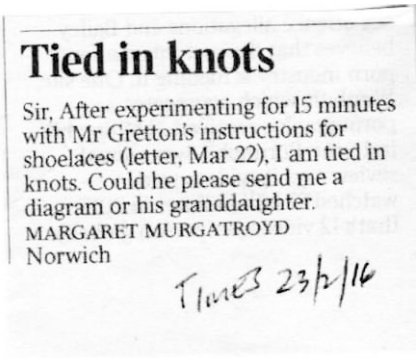
oOo

Looping the loop

Sir, If Sally Cant's double bow is not preventing her shoelaces from untying (letter, Mar 19), may I suggest the technique that my granddaughter taught me in when I was in my mid-sixties: make the first half of a reef knot as normal; make a loop with your left hand; wrap the right lace half-way around the loop and pull it through the hole made by your thumb, forming a second loop; take this round again and through the same hole. Pull both loops tight. The knot will hold even with leather laces and can be undone with a simple tug at either end.

EDWIN GRETTON
West Bradford, Lancs

TIMES 22/3/16



Tied in knots

Sir, After experimenting for 15 minutes with Mr Gretton's instructions for shoelaces (letter, Mar 22), I am tied in knots. Could he please send me a diagram or his granddaughter.

MARGARET MURGATROYD
Norwich

TIMES 23/3/16

Dear Maurice,

I enclose two extracts from the Letters page of The Times (of London) published on consecutive days, 22nd and 23rd March 2016. You will note that the subject matter could be of passing interest to knot tyers.

I don't think Edwin Gretton is likely to respond to either of Margaret Murgatroyd's requests, but I wonder if any of our members will take up the challenge to produce a diagram, assuming, of course, that they either recognise the knot or are able to tie it from the description. I failed on both counts.

David Pepper

Dear Maurice,

Sheetshank, Sheepshank.

Names of two knots when spoken quickly sound alike. Throw in various sailors' dialects 100 years ago, and which name would be known, one or both? The sheetshank would have a specific purpose to protect a worn sheet (a rope that controls the sails); the sheetbend, to quickly repair a broken sheet until it could be spliced or replaced. The sheepshank could have evolved from coils of rope that resembled hanks of wool.

In Des Pawson's article in KM 130 pages 33-35, he considers references to the Sheepshank in various works by Sir Henry Mainwaring, Captain John Smith and Nathaniel Boteler in the seventeenth century - "Lastly is the Sheepshank which is a knot they cast upon a runner or Tackle when it is too long to take in the goods …". I have never seen a drawing of a Sheepshank 'cast upon a runner', most drawings of a sheepshank rarely exceed a foot long (300mm).

The adoption of a formula to calculate an exact 'drop', depending on someone's weight when they are hung, is credited to William Marwood, England's hangman 1871-1883. He said his predecessor William Calcraft, England's longest-serving hangman (45 years) 'hung them', but that he, Marwood, 'executed them'. Marwood's formula for the drop was the victim's weight in pounds divided into 1,260. This was amended in the 1888 Aberdare Report to 1,000. An eleven stone man would need a drop of eight feet by Marwood's formula, which was amended after 1888 to six-and-a-half feet.

Ashley describes the method of hanging at sea using a sheepshank: The knot used in hanging would have one end hitched as normal at the victim's end. At the other end a false loop would be stopped with thin twine so that when the rope was hauled against the block, the sheepshank would collapse. But I consider that when the crew hauled the victim aloft and the sheepshank collapsed, the crew would still be hauling the rope, taking up some of the sheepshank, and I believe hanging at sea was less complicated, a stopper knot being tied between two blocks. When the stopper knot hit the second block it would come to an abrupt halt causing a slight jerk on the noose, speeding the strangulation of the victim. A similar method is used in modern Iran for certain crimes, the victim being hauled aloft by a crane.

Sheetshank-sheepshank. Ain't knotting interesting?

Owen K Nuttall

Dear Maurice,
Rope that I made years ago. I am now 94, any one around still?
Fred Carrington

oOo

Dear Maurice,

Those of us who have an interest in all things maritime will be delighted to learn that the SS Freshspring the last of the 120ft Fresh class water carriers launched in 1946, powered by a triple expansion steam engine, recognised as being of historic significance is coming to Bideford, North Devon, UK, around July this year, to be opened to the public.

The society concerned is, like us, run as an educational charity and they were delighted to learn of our existence and hope we can be of some mutual benefit. They will be extremely pleased if they could get some volunteers to do some rope work aboard the vessel.

There is something here for everybody, rope mats, mooring ropes, something tidy to sound the foghorn with, a wheel "amidships" turks head, practical and fancy work and as a visit to their website will show, among some great pictures, a big shiny bell with no bell rope!

Our Guild will come to the attention of a great number of visitors which will do us no harm at all. It could even prove to be a great place for a Guild excursion or meeting place. The vessel is presently moored on the River Severn being prepared for the passage to Bideford.

They may be in need of some help now, so if you have any interest in the project or want to talk about it, please send an e mail to GT at v8110@hotmail.co.uk or ring 01271 446100 or 07713 446135.

Gordon Teenan

oOo

Dear Maurice,

I am very grateful that Lindsey re-published the article on Rope in the last issue 130 March 2016. Now I have a chance to add to the big thanks for the chance encounter with Des a long time ago, the help of IGKT for contact with Jeff Wyatt which led to Mick Betts who continues the work now my tendons have given out.

The next point is relevant to the proposals for a youth section on the website and anyone talking to children at events. Readers might be mystified by the reference to Johnny Morris on page 27. In the original article as submitted, everything beyond The Presentation had no capital letters, punctuation or even paragraphs. Here is the reason. Johnny Morris presented one of my BBC School Radio broadcasts. He sent me eight pages of a close-typed letter with no capital letters, punctuation or even paragraphs, which I thought was a sign of old age as he was then retired and doing me a favour. I typed up the scripts in the usual formal style

He arrived in the studio, saw my script, and politely asked for his original letter. He then read it out, beautifully timed and full of rich imagery in one take, lasting 19'50", exactly the length of the broadcast. It's a trick of the trade, worth learning from the master, who wrote all his TV and radio material in this way: write out the spoken word as you prepare to work with children, especially so for the language, descriptions and stories about rope.

I'll be in contact with John Staley soon.

Kind Regards

Dr Mike Howarth
07778 537505 01992 587292 http://www.mhmvr.co.uk

A GOOD TURN
By Cazbil

A long time ago I was involved in a project called Borobudur, the replica of an 8th century ship built to demonstrate that the Indonesians traded with West Africa in that period. The vessel was rigged with incredibly rough black rope which, being very hard on the hands, I suggested should be ditched at the earliest opportunity. It was, but I managed to save a couple of metres, having never seen its like before. On my return home, I sent it to the Guild's Des Pawson who was delighted to have it. Much investigation revealed that the unusual rope was produced locally from the sugar date palm, a sample of which is now in the museum. At the same time, we needed to make some deck cleats, and obtained some local wood called 'Ajuke'. It was very hard and difficult to work, but well suited to the job. There was a spare piece, and I thought 'There's a couple of fids in that!'

I carried that chunk of wood around for years, and every time I came across a wood-worker or a woodturner at a summer show, I asked 'Can you get a couple of fids out of this?' Sometimes I had to answer the basic question 'What's a fid?' But I never found anyone willing to do it, until recently, a chance remark by a friend in the Guild that he had a decent lathe left him badly exposed! Out came the wood, out came my old boxwood fid for him to copy.

When that was given to me, it had a broken tip. A rather skilful friend of mine, (sadly no longer with us) called Little Neil (to distinguish him from Big Neil) turned a brass tip for it with a coarse internal thread to screw it onto the sound part - and it is still doing sterling service.

Incidentally, at some stage I discovered the wood also came from the sugar date palm! The upshot is that, courtesy of my friend who had enough courage to 'go for it', knowing that the wood was unique and if it split (which seemed likely) it was irreplaceable. I now have a nice couple of fids turned from a rather unusual wood from Bangawangi on the south coast of Java.

The Constrictor Knot: making medicine safer

By Dr David Williams

Millions of life-saving airway devices are used every day in anaesthesia, emergency medicine, and intensive care. The two most commonly used airway devices are the endotracheal tube (ETT), a tube which passes via the nose or mouth into the trachea (wind pipe); and the laryngeal mask airway (LMA), a slipper-shaped device which sits at the back of the throat.

Both devices have a stem of cylindrical cross-section which must be secured near the lips. If the devices are not properly secured, the LMA or ETT may slip out causing the patient's airway to become obstructed; or the ETT may slip too far down the trachea into one of the two main bronchi, resulting in ventilation of just one of the lungs. Both situations may be rapidly fatal.

Adhesive tape is sometimes used to secure airway devices to the face, but cannot be removed rapidly if the patient begins to cough or gag, and leaves a sticky residue. The traditional method of securing airway devices with a cotton tie around the back of the head is therefore still preferred by most anaesthetists; however the knots which are commonly used are often unfit for purpose (e.g. Overhand Knot).

An appropriate system of knots used must:

a) grasp the stem of the airway device firmly to prevent misplacement
b) not slip, even when wet (eg with saliva)
c) be quick to tie (time is of the essence when inserting an airway into a patient who is not breathing!)
d) be simple to tie, so that mistakes are not made; and also so that it is easy to learn, remember, and teach.
e) allow quick release of the airway.

The Clove Hitch has been used in this application (Gonzales, 1986), but tends to slip or spill unless secured with extra half-hitches around the standing part.

The Constrictor Knot (also called the Gunner's Knot or Whip Knot) is a much better knot for securing the convex stem of the airway device (Madden, 1992), but is difficult to untie. This limitation is overcome by the addition of a Slipped Reef Knot tied over the cheek, which allows the loose ends of the tie to be joined under gentle tension without slipping, and allows the airway device and attached tie to be rapidly removed by pulling on the free end (Figure 1, asterisk) (Williams, 2013).

There are at least three methods of tying the Constrictor Knot (Figure 1, a-c):

a) Tied with an End (Budworth, 2000, Ashley #1249)

The free end of the tie is passed around the stem, under the standing end, and around the stem in the same direction a second time. It is then tucked under itself, and then under the first turn to complete the knot. This allows the Constrictor Knot to be tied around the stem of the airway device without disconnecting the patient from the breathing system, but is more difficult to learn and takes longer to tie.

b) Tied in the Bight: Twisting Method (Grognow)

The tie is twisted to form two loops in the horizontal plane. These are crossed to form a "figure of eight", which is then folded in half backwards on itself, so that the two loops overlap, and dropped over the stem. The airway device is then connected to the breathing system. This is a simpler and faster method than 1), however it requires a flat surface to lay out the two loops in a horizontal plane. For the anaesthetist standing at the head of the patient, the only available surfaces are the edge of the pillow or mattress, which are usually too small and uneven to facilitate this.

c) Tied in the Bight: Loop Method (Budworth, 2000; Ashley 1993, #1251).

Working from the bottom upwards and from right to left, wrap the tie loosely around the front of the stem one complete turn. Reach under the right-hand standing part of the tie, grab a loop from the upper turn, and pull it below the standing end. Twist the loop clockwise 180 degrees, fold the loop up over the standing part, and drop it over the free end of the stem of the airway device. The airway device is then connected to the breathing system. This is the author's preferred technique as it is easy to learn and with little practice can be performed in a single rapid movement.

Once the correct position of the airway device has been confirmed, the Constrictor Knot should be slid into position and tightened around the stem of the airway device by pulling on both ends of the tie simultaneously. Regardless of the method used, the Constrictor Knot should be checked to verify that it has been tied correctly: it should have 180 degree rotational symmetry about the horizontal axis; and when the overlying diagonal strand is pulled aside, a simple Overhand Knot should be revealed beneath (Asher, 1989). The Slipped

Reef Knot should then be used to join the loose ends of the cotton tie over the cheek (Figure 1).

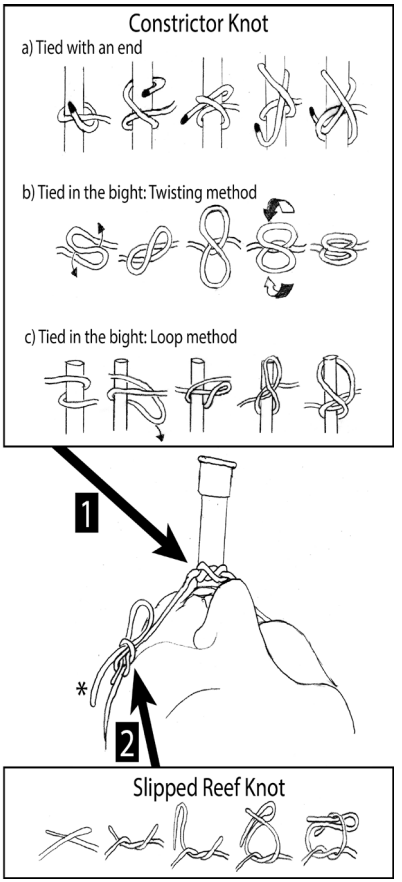


Figure 1

Variants of the Constrictor Knot such as the Double Constrictor Knot (Budworth, 2000; Ashley 1993, #1252), and (Ashley 1993, #1253) provide an even better grip, however for this particular application, the complexity outweighs the benefits. Other possible alternatives include the Slipped Constrictor Knot (Ashley 1993, #1250), Boa Knot (Collingwood, 1996), and Transom Knot (Petit 2013; Ashley 1993, # 1255). I would be keen to hear of any other solutions for this particular problem.

Dr David Williams
Consultant Anaesthetist,
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Morriston Hospital, Swansea SA6 6NL
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Acknowledgements
The author was introduced to knot tying in a bookshop on a wet weekend four years ago by the chance discovery of Philippe Petit's wonderful book "Why Knot?".

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and further discussion at:

Anaesthesia [online] (21 Oct 2013) Comments on: Knots to Secure Airway Devices: Available at: http://www.respond2articles.com/ANA/forums/post/1510.aspx [Accessed 17 Feb 2016].

Trustees' decision on the use of the IGKT logo

The Trustees have agreed that national organisations may use the name of their body in their native language to surround the IGKT logo
(GOLD Turk's Head (3L,4B) on a BLUE circle) rather than the name of the international body.

The typeface must be Times New Roman, Bold, black on a white background.

The blue and gold of the logo must be the colours specified in the table opposite.

	GOLD	BLUE
R	247	13
G	178	31
B	0	95
C	2	100
M	33	96
Y	100	32
K	0	27

APWA AGM
by Maurice McPartlan

Saturday 26 March, the Australian Plaiters and Whipmakers Association (APWA) got together for the "Stanthorpe meet" – held every other year – and their AGM. This is also the occasion for members to bring in their work to show off and enter into a competition. The categories of the competition are numerous, going from novice to junior to open categories for articles varying from knots, hatbands and belts, to working and decorative whips.

This was my first ever APWA AGM and so I spent time wandering around having a chat with different members and finding out what they do (as well as gawking at some of the examples of work entered into the different categories of the competition!)

Bill Morris, *from Kurri Kurri, who describes his work as "a hobby turned almost business," presented a decorated roo whip with a 60-strand roo raw-hide handle, which eventually won the best in class ribbon for decorative whip.*

Bill was a member of the APWA committee and was later elected President by the members.

Peter Thorndike *is a PE teacher living in Brisbane who plaits whips as a hobby. (Note the little whip on his hat!)*

At Stanthorpe he was showing his whip – sometimes referred to as the "Snowy River" whip which took him some 300 hours to make and won him the Australian Plaiting Championship.

The whip has a 72-strand handle while the whip itself is made of 32 strands. Peter went on to win numerous ribbons at Stanthorpe for other work and also left as the most successful competitor.

Lex Freeman *I didn't get many biographical details from Lex who hails from Mooloolaba on the Sunshine Coast. That is because I was too interested in listening to him explain how he prepares a weighted cane handle for a stockwhip.*

He also enjoys doing "small stuff" as evidenced from his box of "pieces" pictured right – including boar tusk and crocodile tooth articles.

Geoff Cook *When I met Geoff, he was discussing with Jim Creswell the work that he had done on the handles of some of his tools a technique that he called the Scobie" (after a legendary Australian whipmaker) or Aztec hitch and Jim called "fish-scale braiding".*

He was just getting some of his bullwhip hat-bands out to show me when we were called away to something else! However, you can admire an example of his work in the picture. (Apologies Geoff, I was more interested in your hatband than in getting your portrait!)

Andrew Mauch *I found myself sitting next to Andrew at the beginning of the AGM, so I was able to have quite a long chat with him.*

He hails from Free Stone near Warwick and is a professional whipmaker. However, as with many of the stories that I heard, Andrew had nothing but gratitude for older whipmakers who had taught him the art of whipmaking!

The idea that many (most?) were happy to share their knowledge and expertise was good to hear and I certainly experienced something similar both at the meeting and when I then went on to follow an intensive whipmaking course in Burrum Heads – 3 whips in 5 days – with Lex Carey, but that is another story.

Trevor Donjahn *While waiting for the meeting to start, I saw someone beavering away, so went to have a look and it turned out to be Trevor, covering a buckle in leather.*

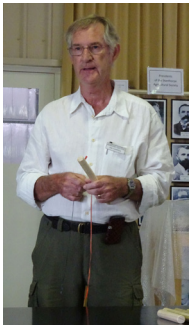
Sitting through the AGM, I was struck by the many similarities between the IGKT and the APWA: members are an aging group – few present below the age of 50 and a dearth of younger members. They have about 150 domestic and 12 international members. At the meeting we were 45. Of the domestic, 2 had travelled just over 1500 km to get there, and they were from the Eastern part of Australia!

There is also an issue of this national group being "THE" authority – in Australia – on things plaiting and whipmaking and how that might be used to enhance their image and promote their art / trade. Be that in standardising rules for plaiting / whipmaking / knotting competitions or in spreading the word to untapped audiences. All elements that IGKT thinks about, discusses and struggles with.

Plaiters and whipmakers use a lot more knots than they probably admit to and there are many in the APWA who could show us members of the IGKT a thing or ten! Yours truly would humbly suggest that we need to maximise interaction.

After the AGM, members broke for lunch while the judges took all the competition whips outside to try them out for balance weighting and all the other minutiae of the whipmaking affacionado. As the judges are all experienced whipmakers themselves, their judgement seems to be well accepted and their critique of the whips taken as helpful. Again while everyone had their lunch inside and ignored the judges, I was out on the veranda drinking it all in!

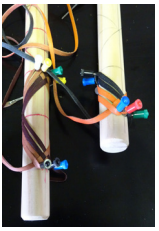
Jim Caswell *gave a presentation on Turks Heads after lunch. He is a member of the IGKT and – spoiler alert! – will be coming to the IGKT AGM in 2017.*



After lunch Jim gave a presentation on how to take the stress out of tying Turks Heads.

If I have understood correctly, with Jim's method, persons wishing to cover a piece with a Turks Head can simply tie one that will fill the space without having to go through complicated calculations about the number of Leads and Bights needed to do the job.

The images show a couple of his mandrels that he used in the talk. I think that he has also promised to write something on the subject.



In the Knotting Category of the competition, Jims "tapping hammer", which he uses to finish knots which cannot be rolled, won first place.

Jim also works on complex "Turks Head" shapes and so also struggles with the issue that I mentioned at one of our AGMs, namely how to tell whether a "knot" can be tied with one strand or not.

There were two other sessions: David Blomfield did the first on making silver ferules for whip handles. I was caught up elsewhere and so missed this and then Jules Godfrey did a session on knife sharpening, working solely with a band sander, again, his demonstration was so interesting that I forgot to take pictures or make more detailed notes!

Two other issues that fascinated me are 1) the sorely missed Ron Edwards, and 2) paracord!

Ron Edwards:

There were few conversations where his name did not crop up! However it is clear that in the vast collection of his works errors have crept in… Some like Jim Creswell speak openly of this and try to correct. "Heresy!" seem to say others who then take to task those who point out mistakes.

It seems to me that Ron's body of work will be published and republished and so, members of the APWA could do us all a great service by noting problems - in text or drawings – either with suggested correction or by simply pointing it out and that the APWA could pass these on to Rams Skull Press so that future editions could be corrected. Failing that, as with the Ashley Book of Knots, at least a list of errors could be circulated.

Paracord

In the IGKT, we are aware that enthusiasts of paracord have set up their own group and publish their own magazine. In Stanthorpe, a "paracord whip" was not accepted into the competition…

While it is clear that tradition has working whips made out of different sorts of leather, I would love to know how a para-cord whip is made. Is there not room for all? If a paracord whip works, why not? At the AGM there was a suggestion that this is a subject that might need some future discussion!

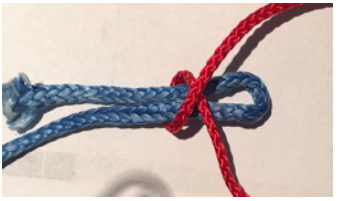
EMERGENCY TOW ROPE SYSTEM
by Robert Underhill

EMERGENCY TOW ROPE SYSTEM UTILISING A SIMON BEND

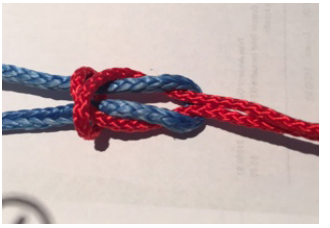
All tugs should have a system that will enable the crew to pass an emergency tow line up to a vessel very quickly in the event of the primary system failing. Quite a few tugs these days are fitted with either two winches or one winch with two drums so that a second line is available for almost instant deployment if required. However on those tugs fitted with just one drum an alternative system should be developed for reconnecting the tug to the vessel.

On a tug where the main line is a large diameter polyester rope with a Dyneema working tail, be it a grommet or pendant, one method of securing an emergency line onto the vessel being worked could be as follows.

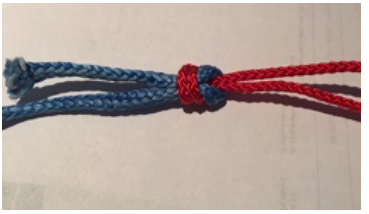
The picture below shows an Amsteel Blue rope representing the main line and the red cord being the emergency grommet which is connected with a Simon Bend, sometimes called a “Simple Simon Bend”*.



First step



Form the bend



Completed

Reverse

*The Alternative Knot Book by Dr Harry Asher

More details on how to form a “Simon Bend” can also be found on the web.

This bend will secure the eye of a rope to another rope of the same size, or larger, in such a way that as the bend is formed up under load, the turns around the body of the existing line will grip onto this rope.

In the case where the main line on the tug has been separated, by utilizing this Simon Bend, a stand-by line, usually of similar size Dyneema to the normal grommet or pendant, which is available on deck, can be connected to the separated end of the existing main line.

What needs to be done in the case of a polyester main line is to form an eye in the end of the separated rope. The tail of this eye should be at least two metres long. The steps above are followed to secure the emergency tail to this temporary eye. If time permits, the new tail should be secured to a convenient bollard on the tug and the Simon Bend formed up under load.

During this tensioning of the bend the long tail on the temporary eye of the main line will be drawn back, hence the particularly long tail, but once the tensioning is complete, this movement will be minimal when further load is applied to the emergency rope by the tug as it re-applies force to the vessel.

The tug should now be able to re-connect the vessel being serviced giving the pilot full access to the tug, albeit with an emergency connection.

It should be well understood that this emergency tow rope system should only be used at about 50% of the tug's normal pulling power.

This is just an **emergency tow rope**, and, as such, will get the tug back into pulling service very quickly, especially if the procedure is practised regularly, so that in the real situation it is almost automatic. Whatever system is put in place it should be done in consultation with the pilots.

This paper is presented, not as a definitive process, but a suggestion to give an idea of one way of addressing this important challenge in towage.

Robert Underhill

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SAVE YOUR HANDS
by Des Pawson MBE

How not to cut your hands:
some tools for pulling fine line tight.

The rigging of ships and the making of sails entails much pulling and stretching of ropes and small stuff, such as the working tight of whippings, seizings, stitches, servings, lashings and all sorts of bindings in both fibre and wire.

When it comes to pulling fine line tight, especially if you put any kind of force into the job, your hands soon develops blisters and cuts. Of course, you could cut lengths of bicycle inner tube and slide them over your fingers or go to the trouble of making tubes of leather, which would work if you were making half hitches round a ship's wheel. For whippings and seizings often a bit more of a pull is wanted. The simplest thing that can be done is to wrap a few turns of the line round a stick or spike and heave.

The German Navy use a DREHKNÜPPEL, a stick with a hole to anchor the end of the line prior to wrapping the line round itself, making something to pull hard with, yet without harm to hands.

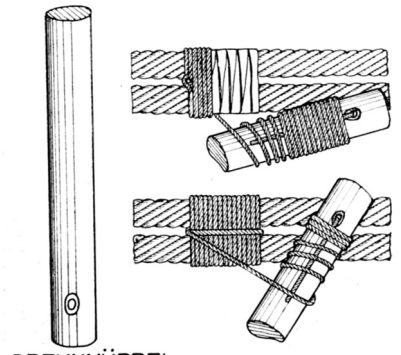
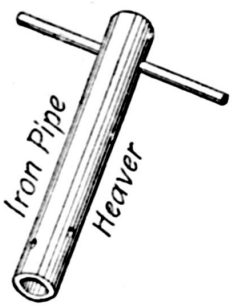


Abb. 15 Drahtbändsel aufsetzen mit Drehknüppel



The American, Austin Knight, in his *Modern Seamanship [5th ed 1910],* shows an iron pipe heaver with holes at one end and a bar handle at the other, used when splicing wire rope. This would work in much the same manner.

In Mariehamn, in the Aland Islands, I saw on the POMMERN a variation on this idea, used by their rigger known as 'Little Brother'. He had a wooden rod with a slot on the end, that he used in a similar way for tightening whippings and seizings. The handle was already served tightly with marline to give it more grip, the slot made it easier to catch the fine line that was to be tightened.

He also used a piece of steel tube with a slot in one end and a couple of holes at right angles at the other end, through which a spike would go to give a grip when twisting . He used this to pull wire seizings tight. He called both these tools in Swedish DREEAR, which translates as HEAVER.

I find that the steel tube with a slot works well for that sort of job and also to pull short ends from a splice or such like, a slot being that much easier to use than a hole.

© Des Pawson 21.3.2016

The IGKT AGM 2016 meeting Fareham, Hampshire UK

The Solent Branch, under the calm direction of Chris Jenkins, organised a longer-than-usual get-together around Saturday's AGM. During the previous four days a stimulating selection of workshops and lectures was presented at Solent's normal meeting place – Fareham Sailing and Motor Boat Club.

Over the three days some forty members enjoyed talking to each other and also taking part in a variety of workshops and talks. Louis Bartos had travelled from Alaska to give his workshop on handling sail-canvas. The techniques he demonstrated were tried by many members - with very different degrees of success.

Joe Bennett demonstrated diamond patterns in both Spanish hitching and spherical knots; Ian Schofield made dragonfly jigs; David Pearson showed how to do Star knots and Lynne Hudson demonstrated the making of jewellery. We had talks on Circular Mats from Colin Byfleet, Netted Bags by Willeke van der Ham, and Dyneema Ropes on Tugs by Robert Underhill.

All of these generated a lot of interest and discussion and kept us happily occupied for the time whilst being very well catered for by the local team of ladies.

For the Friday and Saturday we moved to Ferneham Hall in the centre of Fareham where there was room to lay out fifty tables and display up to eight rope machines of various designs.

On the Friday, rope making was the theme for the day and the operation of the various machines was discussed. Louis Bartos described some of the interesting insights he has had in researching the construction of the sails on the 'MARY ROSE' and Des Pawson gave an interesting talk on the history of rope walks.

For the main day on Saturday, the capacious interior of Ferneham Hall allowed for a wide variety of exhibits and demonstrations of knotting and rope-making.

There were displays of knot work by knotters from eight countries, and also related crafts including spinning, weaving, ships in bottles, bookbinding and bell ropes, all of which led to many opportunities to exchange views on techniques and ideas.

The ropewalk and knitting circle proved popular meeting places.

Knitting hub - Jane Erricker, Lynne Hudson, Chris Jenkins, Jackie Hopson

Île de France - Jacques Chaponet, Michelle Calllier, Antoine Leroy, Jean-Paul Braud, Corinne Braud, Jean-louis Callier

If you have pictures of work displayed at the AGM you would like to be considered for publication please let us have them

The AGM was held on the Saturday morning and in the afternoon the hall was open to the public. Peter Hennessey ran a workshop on Soft Shackles.

The President's welcoming speech

"Lectures on various subjects
Complex Knotting Demonstrations
Mathematical aspects of round mats
Art of stitching thick canvas"

"My concern is the recruitment of new members, not only adults but also youngsters to ensure a strong, healthy future for IGKT"

"We can also develop more links between local branches, and also create new ones - even in non-English speaking countries"

Points from the floor

Presentation to organiser Chris Jenkins

At the end of the business meeting, President Antoine Leroy awarded the prestigious President's Cup to Lindsey Philpott, retiring editor of Knotting Matters, in recognition of his excellent work with KM and as a leading figure in the Pacific Branch, based in California. Lindsey could not be with us and the cup was received on his behalf by his compatriots, ex-president Dan Machowski and Bob Dollar.

The weather was beautiful for the whole week – 25°C is rare for the UK in early May – and was an added bonus for an excellent meeting.

The traditional Knot Tyers' Supper made a superb finale with good food and great entertainment in the form of a lively selection of sea-shanties after the meal.

ORGANISING A MEETING
by Willeke van der Ham

What do you need to organize a knot tyers' meeting?

A few basic principles

A space big enough for the number of people you expect. Bear in mind that good venues are often booked more than a year ahead.

Of course, you need to decide on the programme, and then set and publish the date of the meeting - the earlier the better, and the more likely you are to get a good turnout.

A great space is not just one that's large enough, it must also be easily accessible, and have adequate facilities such as kitchens and bathrooms.

If your meeting is to last for more than a day, are there options for staying overnight - either at the venue itself, or in nearby camping and caravan parks, or hotels or B&Bs?

It is important to make sure that the location can be reached by car (with adequate parking) and by public transport.

Are there options to make meals on site or have them delivered, or are there places nearby where people can find food and drink for themselves?

At larger meetings, people often like to show their work - there needs to be space enough to do so, and enough tables on which to display it.

If you have someone good at PR, you can't start too early trying to get your meeting publicised - the local press is great, the national media, even better.

If you would like more advice and guidance – more detailed information can be downloaded from the IGKT http://www.igkt.net

STITCHING 600-OHM LADDER LINE

By Bill Crowell

This is a follow-on to my previous article for the Tilted Terminated Folded Dipole. This article shows the feed line going from the 12:1 transformer up to the antenna itself.

The first fabrication method used fibreglass dowel drilled to the appropriate spacing for 14AWG wire. The centre-to-centre spacing is 8.8cm (3.5in). The wire material was threaded through the holes in the spacers, the spacers were aligned every 46cm (18in) and the wire was secured by industrial cyanoacrylate adhesive. The wire was 14AWG MTW stranded.

Subsequent testing has shown that there are two problems with this build:

1. Environmental failure of the adhesive causing spacers to break free and slide along the wire as shown in figure 1.

2. Inspection of the wire underneath the insulation shows corrosion that is attributed to environmental contamination.

It is likely that this problem also exists in the main body of the antenna with the fibreglass spreaders; however, the tension on the antenna keeps the spreaders in-place.

It was suggested to the author that the use of aircraft-grade SPC cable might be employed for both the feed line and the antenna itself. SPC is silver-plated copper and has a PTFE coating. As the author has an abundance of this material, numerous attempts were made to devise a method of joining the fibreglass spacers to the wire.

None of the readily available adhesives will adhere to PTFE. This means that a mechanical connection is required. Several attempts were made using combinations of heat-shrink tubing and nylon zip-ties. None would provide sufficient friction along the length of the wire to secure it to the spacers.

As the author is in the process of learning the art of cable lacing, an attempt was made to use lacing methods to secure the wire to the spacers. This was ultimately successful and the result is shown in figure 2:

This illustrates the first of the completed stitches. The holding strength is more than sufficient.

The stitching material is 0.5mm braided Dacron that is UV treated – commonly used in mini-blinds.

The tying method is shown in figure 3:

The line is doubled and run under the spacer, up and around the wire on both sides, then through a double stitch knot (Larks Head). This creates a complete turn round the spacer and two complete turns around the wire on each side of the spacer.

The benefit of the double stitch knot is that it holds tension in the line as the line is drawn through the knot. It may then be worked until sufficient clamping force is exerted. More tension is applied by separating the free ends and pulling them apart.

The joint is completed by making a square knot with the free ends. This prevents the line from working lose through the double stitch knot.

Fabrication of 15m (40 ft.) of the feed line took approximately 1.5 hours including testing. Now that the method is proved, it will proceed much faster.

I have not observed this configuration in my search of the Internet. I refer this article to the International Guild of Knot Tiers for their consideration and input. The IGKT was instrumental in calling to the author's attention the use of cable stitching on the Mars Rover.

Should this configuration be deemed unique, we will call it the "N4HPG feed line stitch".

Bill Crowell
Pearland, Texas

INDIAN ROPE TRICK

By John Shaw[1]

'Can you do the Indian Rope Trick?' I'm occasionally asked. Smothering a sigh, and conjuring up a smile, I divert the questioner with either 'Knots Galore' (my version of Ashley's #564 & #2581) or a quickie stiff rope effect. But what is the Indian Rope Trick?

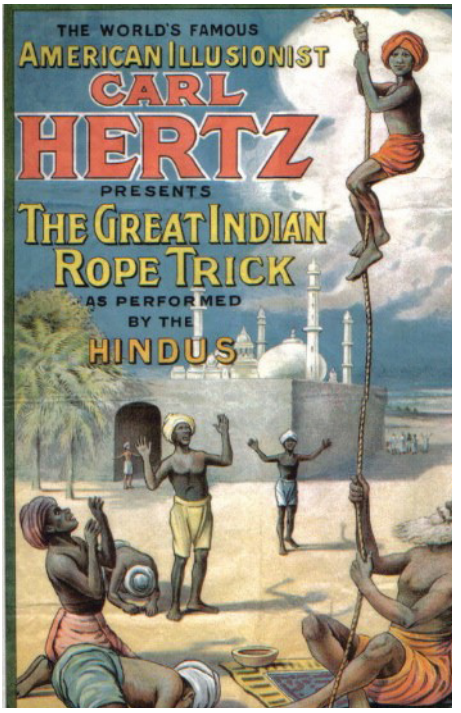
Well, according to a 2004 book by Peter Lamont[2], a former president of the Edinburgh Magic Circle and an award-winning magician, the myth emerged in America, when a writer for the *Chicago Daily Tribune* claimed that the writer had seen an Indian fakir throw a ball of grey twine up until the end was out of sight and it hung vertical and swaying.

A boy of about six years old climbed it to a height of 30-40 feet and disappeared. Then the twine disappeared. This was performed in the open air, surrounded by onlookers. Presumably the article was an attempt to boost the newspaper's sales (given its by-line, Fred S. Ellmore); and four months later, on 6th December 1890, that paper admitted the piece had been an invention and published a retraction. At which time ownership of the hoax seems to have been accepted by the reporter John E. Wilkie.

By then the story had reached London, England, where some Victorians were persuaded that Western science could still be outdone by Oriental mysticism. Numerous individuals, from missionaries and colonial administrators to returning British tourists of rank and reputation, claimed to have witnessed this 'Indian rope trick', or knew someone who had. And so the story was retold and embellished.

The twine became a rope. The fakir, armed with a sword, climbed up after the boy. They argued. The boy's dismembered limbs head and body fell down to the ground … whereupon the man descended and restored the boy to life in one piece. Journalists no doubt found all of this too good to verify and contradict. Some stage illusionists actually travelled to India, seeking the secret so as to include it in their acts, while the playbill of one performer in the 1860s boasted a nightly performance of the Indian Rope Trick (when what he actually practised was escapology).

Disbelievers included the Magic Circle in London, England who conceded that versions of the trick might be achieved in a theatre, but were determined to discredit and disprove accounts of its legendary performance by magic, hypnotism, drug-induced mass hallucination, or other Eastern trickery.



In 1934 they offered a prize of £500 guineas (£225) to any individual who could reproduce the trick. It has never been awarded. So an American hoax, English gullibility and theatrical hype, combined to create and perpetuate a myth that resurfaces to irk me more than 150 years later.

[1] author of The Directory of Knots

[2] *The Rise of the Indian Rope Trick – the Biography of a Legend* © 2004 by Peter Lamont, published by Little, Brown, an imprint of Time Warner Books, London, UK. At the time of publication Dr Lamont was a Research Fellow at the University of Edinburgh, in Scotland, working on the history and performance of magic. His readable but scholarly book is, he assures readers, the most accurate and complete history of the Indian Rope Trick to date.

POETRY to PONDER

I never Met a Knot I didn't Like

from Knotty Potty & other Pithy Poems for Knotting Devotees,
by Jennifer Wren (© Jennifer Wren 2006)

I never met a knot I didn't like …
For they resemble people really,
Some of whom one can take to at first sight
And make of each a valued lifelong friend.
Others need time to get to know as well,
But this is not too difficult to do.
While an off-putting few
Are those folk who
Can strain and stretch one's patience and be hell,
Until one finds some qualities that transcend
Their irksomeness, when they turn out alright.
So, like I said before sincerely,
I never met a knot I didn't like.

After *'I never met a man I didn't like.'*
Will Rogers (1879-1935,
US actor, rancher, humourist

CIRCULAR MATS
By Colin Byfleet

Some members will have read the monograph *Design and Make Rope Mats and Rosettes* by Nils Christian Rossing, published by the Guild, and may also have come across the 2011 paper *Circular Knotworks* by Alexander and Christoffer Åström in the Journal of Mathematics and the Arts.

These authors have taken various ethnic circular designs and analysed them mathematically. Their papers also give a substantial number of plans from which to make interesting mats.

The Åströms have specifically looked at Celtic designs of the type which appear on ancient grave-slabs in northeastern Scotland, in the villages of Hilton of Cadboll and Nigg.

Fig 1 Reproduction of Hilton of Cadboll stone

These designs were investigated by a number of Scandinavian authors including Jens Kusk Jensen and Kai Lund.

They tried to see if they could modify the arrangements to make them able to be tied with a single strand.

This was done by trial and error and the resulting mat called a *Rosenmatta* (Rose Mat).

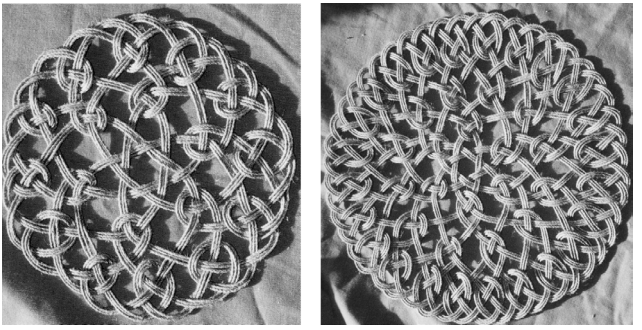


Fig 2 Rose Mats

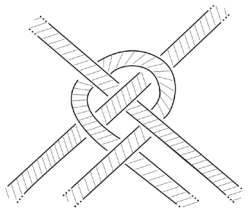


Fig 3 Basic Structure

The basic structure of the *rosenmatta* is a symmetrical loop with a pair of crossed cords in the middle.

These loops are then arranged in circular layers around a centre.

The Åström paper reveals a neat solution to the problem of designing and analyzing mats to check for single-strandedness. There is a link between three simple quantities:

1 Symmetry Number: the number of loops in the innermost layer, d (ie the overall symmetry of the mat)
2 Layer Number: the number of layers of loops, l
3 Connection Number: a number describing the connections between the innermost loops, k. If one loop is connected to its nearest neighbour then k = 1, the next nearest gives k = 2 and so on.

Many people will be familar with the criterion for being able to tie a Turk's Head with a single strand, namely that the number of bights and the number of leads cannot share a divisor greater than one, eg a 4B x 3L knot (the guild symbol) has a single strand but a 6B x 3L knot does not (both six and three can be divided by three). The circular mats solution is similar - but a little more complicated.

The number (2l+k) and the Symmetry Number, d may not have a common divisor (s) greater than one.

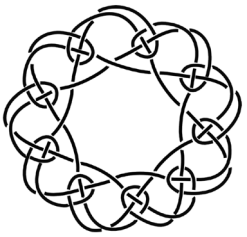


Fig 4

For example, in Fig 4, there are nine loops in the ring (d=9), a single ring of loops (l=1) and the connection is from one loop to the next-but-one (k=2). Here 2l+k = (2 x1) + 2 = 4 and d = 9.

9 and 4 have only 1 as their common divisor, therefore s = 1.

This means that the knot in Fig 6 can be tied with one strand. It is easy to trace this on the picture.

If d and (2l+k) do have a common divisor (s) greater than one, then this number is the number of strands which are needed to tie the knot.

For example, looking at the possible mats with 5-fold symmetry (d = 5) and with three layers of loops (l = 3), then the following table can be constructed:

d	l	k	2l+k	s
5	3	0	6	1
5	3	1	7	1
5	3	2	8	1
5	3	3	9	1
5	3	4	10	2

Here the first four choices of k allow a single-strand knot to be tied and only the last choice, k = 4, needs two strands.

Fig 5 shows a mat with d = 5, l = 3, and k = 2. The pentagonal centre of the knot can be seen quite clearly. Since s = 1, this is a single-strand knot

Some more mats in this family are shown on the next page.

Fig 5

The image in Fig 6 is a setting-out plan for a d = 6, l = 2, k =3 single strand mat.

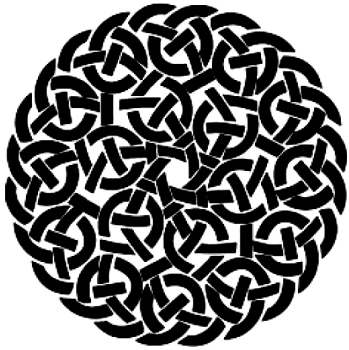


Fig 6

The Åström's have recently published an extension to this topic where more extensive lacing can be created both inside and outside the layers of loops. See *Alexander Åström & Christoffer Åström (2015) Circular knotworks II: combining pattern No. 295 with Turk's heads, Journal of Mathematics and the Arts, 9:3-4, 91-102*.

A message from the author: If you would like plans, such as the one in Fig 6 on the previous page, to make your own mats, please email secretary@igkt.net.

MACRAMÉ FEATHERS

By Maurice McPartlan

During the 2012 IGKT AGM, I "discovered" David Lambert and his macramé butterflies and learned to make them – made good Christmas presents that year!

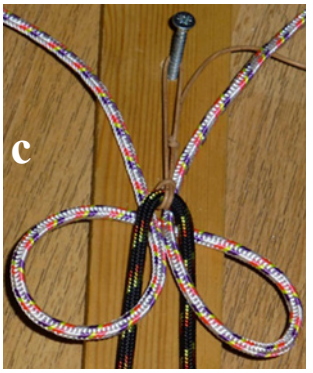
However I was looking for something to make for an old friend who likes wearing hats and thought of making a feather to go with the hat-band.

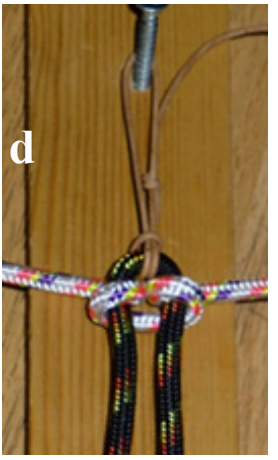
Before going into the method, a few pictures of different feathers to whet your appetite!

(NB, in the following sequence, I have used climbing rope to help make the pictures clearer)

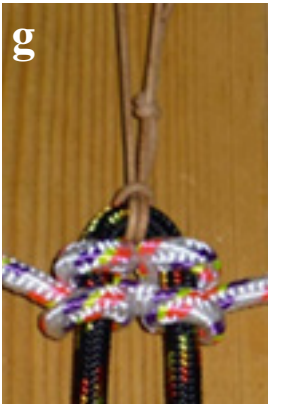
While the feather can be tied in the hand, it is much easier if the base string is tied to a triangle of nails/screws and I have found it easier to tie the ends of the base to the 2 nails, but to attach the apex with another piece of string.

The strand is placed under the base strings (a) the two ends are brought over the base lines and between itself and through the apex (making a Lark's Head, Bale Hitch or Ring Hitch ABOK #59) – b, & c





The right-hand strand then makes a half-hitch on the right-hand base line, completing a clove hitch on the right hand base. (d & e) Similarly, the left-hand strand makes a half-hitch on the left-hand base line completing a clove hitch. (f & g). The first strand is attached.

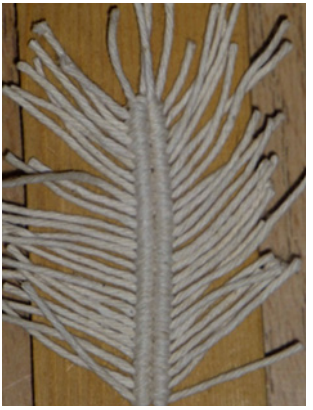


Further strands are now added following steps a-g until you have enough for the feather.

NB New strands should all be added to the base by laying them under the base-lines.

Two further points to note in adding the strands: After the initial Lark's Head, pull each strand tight before adding the second half hitch. As each strand is added, tighten by pulling towards the top of the feather.

When the feather is the right size, remove it from the nails – sometimes there is enough room to add a strand at the apex once the support string has been removed.



The feather should look something like the picture (NB detail of the back)

At this stage the feather doesn't look very special, but it is amazing what a difference a hair-cut can make.

Decide on the shape that you want and trim the feather. It is transformed into something like this. The feather can be made to curve by pulling one of the base-lines.

My final tip is to put a tiny bit of super-glue down the centre to help avoid strands loosening.

OBITUARY

Jennifer Wren (1920-2016)

Notification of the death of the British knot-tying poetess Jennifer Wren – whose 2007 booklet Knotty Potty & Other Pithy Poems for Knotting Devotees celebrated the IGKT's silver jubilee – has just reached us. In a long life she did many things. During the Second World War she spliced wire mooring ropes for the anti-aircraft barrage balloons sited on Wandsworth Common in south-east London, England.

For a dare, after a fashionable Chelsea Arts Ball in the 1950s, she swam across the River Thames (and back again) wearing her evening gown, high heels, and a large somewhat gaudy hat, holding aloft an open parasol, and grasping a bouquet of flowers presented to her for the occasion by Rupert Persimmon*.

She never married but devoted her middle years to the preservation and breeding of endangered species, becoming an expert on the hermaphrodite capercallies of northern Europe.

But knotting and poetry were her lifelong preoccupations. As she once told a reporter for The Lady magazine, 'There are real poets, mere rhymesters and doggerel McGonagalls. You can call me what you like, but someone has to celebrate the offbeat diversity of knotting.'

Her later years were spent living simply but contently in a disused railway signal box in the south-west of England, until frailty compelled her to enter the Eventide Home for Aged Gentlefolk in the Devonshire town of Torquay, where she died peacefully in her sleep.

She has no known family to mourn her, but will be sadly missed by all her Guild fans.

*Rupert Persimmon's obituary appeared in KM #118 (March 2013).

TIMES PAST

PLENTY OF HARD WORK

Mr & Mrs Bastian in Barking, Essex UK

These photos taken in the early 1950s show Mr Bastian, a 3rd generation ships fender maker in Barking to the east of London working,on a fender.

He worked alone in his backyard with his wife who sewed up the sacking that made the inner core which was filled with cork chippings ...

... whilst he hitched the covers using strands of Coir Yarn.

Life must have been tough. Mr & Mrs Bastian worked very hard as the lorry load of their fenders shows.

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BRANCHES

Belgium
Contact: Ronny Wouters
rcwouters@scarlet.be
Tel: +32(0)3 658 7937
Venue: Akkerlaan 24, 2900 Schoten, België

Canada
Southern Ontario Knot Tyers
http://knotcanada.webs.com/
Contact: John Staley
southern.ontario.knotyers@gmail.com
Tel: +1(1) 905 389 2509
Venue: Hamilton, Ontario

France
www.igkt.fr
Contact: Jean-Pierre Durand
durand0547@orange.fr
Tel: +33(0)6 64 00 66 91

Germany
http://www.knotengilde.de/
Contact: Yuval Dvoran
info@knotengilde.de
Tel:+49 208 307 5171
c/o Schifffahrtgmuseum, Schiffbrücke 39, D-24939 Flensburg

Netherlands
Contact: Frits Ottens frits.efina@telfort.nl
Tel: +31 (0) 587 850 011
Venue: On board De Hoop, Leuvehaven 1, Rotterdam

Sweden
Contact: Christoffer Åström christoffer@knopar.se
Tel: +46 736381731
Venue: Gävle

UNITED KINGDOM

Dorset- UK
Contact: Peter Goldstone goldstonepg@aol.com
Tel: +44 (0)1725 516 258
Venue: Royal Dorset Yacht Club, 11 Custom House Quay Weymouth, Dorset DT4 8BG

East Anglian - UK
Contact: Stuart Weston
pugwash1941@gmail.com
Tel: +44 (0)1449 674 327 or +44 (0)7801 239 731
Venue: Windmill Room, Abbots Hall Primary School, Danescourt Ave, Stowmarket, Suffolk

Midlands - UK
Contact: Bruce Turley
bruce@btknots.co.uk
Tel: +44 (0)1214 534 124
Venue: The Old Swan Inn, (Ma Pardoes), 89 Halesowen Road, Netherton, Dudley, DY2 9PY

North West England - UK
Contact: Ian Rogers
rope.what.knot@gmail.com
Tel: +44 (0)1606 590 729
Venue: Red Lion, 1 Wharton Rd, Winsford, Chester CW7 3AA and Ellesmere Port Boat Museum, S Pier Rd, Ellesmere Port CH65 4FW

Solent - UK
http://igkt-solent.co.uk
Contact: Chris Jenkins
igktchris@btinternet.com
Tel: +44 (0)2392 601 779
Venue: Fareham Sailing and Motor Boat Club, Lower Quay, Fareham, Hampshire PO16 0RA

Surrey - UK
www.surreyknots.org.uk
Contact: Tony Shellard
secretary@surreyknots.org.uk
Tel: +44(0)1483 502 156
Venue: Guildford District Scout Centre, Nightingale Road, Guildford, GU1 1ER

West Country Knotters - UK
Contact: Richard Hopkins
richard@hwlfordd.fsnet.co.uk
Tel: +44 (0)1179 867 146
Venue: The Benjamin Perry Boathouse Phoenix Wharf, Lower Guinea Street, Bristol BS1 6TJ

West Yorkshire - UK
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wayzegoose_uk@yahoo.co.uk
Tel: +44 (0)113 257 2689
Venue: Scout Headquarters, Leeds

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Alaskan - USA
Contact: Charles Rigden
charles@rigdencpa.com
Tel: +(1) 1 928 231 2775
Venue: Anchorage Senior Center, 1300 East 19th Avenue, AK 99501

North American Branch - Knot in the Middle - USA
www.igktnab.org
Contact: Rusty Helms
Rusty@helmscpa.com
Tel: +(1) 1 317 627 4562

North American Branch - Mid-Atlantic Region - USA
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Pacific Americas - USA
www.igktpab.org/
Contact: Jimmy R Williams
igktpab@gmail.com
Tel: +(1) 1 310 679 6864
Venue: Los Angeles Maritime Institute 73 Berth suite 2, San Pedro, CA 90731

BACK COVER: Part of the Hilton of Cadboll stone (see Circular Mats p 36)

IGKT SALES	
Item	**UK £**
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